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The SCRIPTURE Consolations in the
Death of Good Men.

A

S E R M O N

Preach'd at

H A C K N E Y,

September 13. 1719.

Occasion'd by the DEATH of

Mrs. BATHSHUA BARKER,

(Late Wife of the Rev^d. Mr. John Barker,)

Who Departed this LIFE Sept. 3.

By W. HARRIS.

L O N D O N:

Printed for RICHARD FORD, at the Angel
in the Poultry. 1719.

Price Six Pence.

W. Musgrave



Mrs. BATHURST BARKER
(Late Wife of the Rev. Mr. John Barker)
Who Departed this Life Sept. 3

By W. HARRIS

LONDON
Printed for RICHARD FORD, at the Angel
in the Strand, 1793



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To the Reverend

Mr. JOHN BARKER.

SIR,



THE Ceremonies of Grief and Forms of Condolence, however a necessary Compliance with the Custom of the World, and the Kindness of our Friends; are yet as insignificant to relieve a troubled Mind, as a rich and fine Garment, to ease a pained Body, and which perhaps only gives Us Pain to put it on. 'Tis the great Disparagement of all created good, that 'tis least able to help Us when We need it most; and the best Creatures are often miserable Comforters, and Physicians of no Value, under the greatest Distress. But the Consolations of God are not small, and the Comforts of the Scriptures, are able to give Us Hope: There is a mighty Efficacy and Force in the Words of God, and they have been always found a more powerful Relief, than all the Considerations of Philosophy, or any Invention of Humane Reason and Wit.

I HAVE proposed to give a naked Representation of Them in the present Case, in their own Evidence, and upon their proper Authority; as the Objects of our Faith upon the Foot of Divine Revelation. As I bore a sincere Respect to the Person of the Deceased, I could not decline this Service to a Living Friend, under the greatest outward Loss, and with peculiar Circumstances of Grief. I yield to your Desire in this Publication tho' 'tis only a Branch of a more general Subject, of the Scripture Consolations in the Death of our Friends, which I have pursued through all the principal Circumstances of Sorrow in such Cases.

THESE Thoughts were made the more suitable to my own Condition by the Death of an aged Mother, above fourscore Years of Age, about the same Time; and who had been for many Years a great Example of Humility, and Patience; entire Resignation to the Divine Will; Contentment in every State; habitual Thankfulness to God and Man; and of fervent Desires, under,

The DEDICATION.

great Decays of Nature, for herself and all about her, of the Favour of God in Christ, which was Her constant Expression upon all Occasions. May the frequent Removal of our Friends out of this World, Elder and Younger, be a quickning Motive, to holy Diligence, and a constant Warning to prepare to follow them.

THE Argument of the following Discourse naturally leads one to this Observation, which has always appeared considerable to my Thoughts; That 'tis proper to the Divine Being to be the Supreme Lord, and final Happiness of the Creatures, and nothing is more essential and peculiar to God, as He stands related to Us, than to be absolutely obeyed, and to be the chief Good. Now, the final Happiness of the Saints, as well as their present and immediate Happiness, is made to lie very much in being with the Lord, or enjoying him as the beatifick Object. As He is over all God blessed for ever, and We are to observe whatsoever He has commanded; so the Presence of the glorified Redeemer is made a great Ingredient of the final Blessedness, and he is represented not only as the Author, but as the Object of it. The Presence of the highest created Beings, of the innumerable Company of Angels, as well as the Spirits of the perfected Just, only contribute toward our Happiness, as the Partners and Companions of the same Blessedness, not as the proper Causes of it. 'Tis a Pleasure to share with Others, or have Others share with Us, in the highest Happiness; but the Fountain of Life is with God alone, and His Presence the Spring of Fulness of Joy.

I DESIRE always so to esteem of Him and carry it toward Him, as one whom I am obliged to love above all the World, and obey in all Things; and in whose Presence, I hope to find my everlasting Happiness: To be always able to say, To me to live is Christ, and to die is Gain. In this Temper of Mind we may hope to find the Presence of Christ with Us in all the Service and Trial of Life, to be supported by His Grace, and accepted thro' His Blood, to be pronounced Faithful at last, and enter into the Joy of our Lord.

I am,

Your Affectionate Brother,

and Companion in the Kingdom,

and Patience of JESUS CHRIST,

W. HARRIS.

I THESS. IV. 18.

Wherefore comfort one another with these Words.



COMFORT in *Death*, may
 found disagreeably in the
 Ears of Men, when *Mourn-*
ing and Sorrow are thought
 more seasonable; and like
Singing of Songs to an hea-
vy Heart *. Men choose to indulge their
 Grief for the Loss of their Friends, retire
 from the Conversation of the World, and
 give free Vent to their troubled Souls:
 They *mourn, and refuse to be comforted, because*
they are not. But if ever Comforts are need-
 ul, 'tis in a Time of Sorrow, like a Cordial
 to a fainting Spirit, or *Wine to those who are*
of heavy Hearts *. If they are suitable and
 B effectual,

* Prov. xxv. 20.

† Ib. xxxi. 6.

effectual, able to abate our Grief, and support our Minds; they are certainly proper and in Season, when we are Mourning over our Dead, and Lamenting their Loss. We find the Apostle here after several other Directions of Duty in the former Part of the Chapter, proceeds at ver. 13. to direct the Christians to the proper Grounds of Comfort in this Circumstance of Sorrow; *I would not have you ignorant, Brethren, concerning them who are asleep, &c.* The Words I have read, are the Close of the whole Paragraph, which is the proper Seat of this Subject, and contain the peculiar Comforts the Gospel prescribes in the Death of *Good Men*.

IN speaking to Them suitably to the Scope of the Apostle and the present *Occasion*, it will be necessary to consider Two Things:

I. WHAT are the *Words* to which the Apostle refers, and which he makes the Ground of Comfort under the Death of Godly Friends.

II. WHAT Matter of *Comfort* they are proper to afford in such a Case: And then Apply Them.

I. WHAT are those *Words* to which the Apostle refers, and which he makes the Ground of *Comfort* to sorrowful Christians?

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Comfort one another with these Words: i. e. The Words of the fore-going Discourse. And if we look back into the Context, we shall find Two Things referr'd to, which it will be needful to represent a little as the Ground of that Comfort which is to be deriv'd from hence.

§. I. THE *Resurrection* of the Body. This may be consider'd in the following Instance :

THEY will be rais'd from the Dead: *Them also that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him* *. They who have long lain in the Grave, will attend the Appearance of the Glorious Judge. And the *Dead in Christ, shall rise* †. They who died for CHRIST, *Martyrs* to his Faith, or who died *Believers* in CHRIST more at large, and were *faithful to the Death* ; they shall be rais'd to Life again, in Conformity to the Resurrection of CHRIST, and by the Virtue and Power of it. And when they have been long resolv'd into the Dust of the Earth, and scatter'd in remote and distant Parts, they shall rally together, and reunite again by the Power of CHRIST. They who have long slept in the Grave, shall awake and rise. The quickning Head will enliven all his Members, and give Life to them that slept the Sleep of Death. The Prophet speaks

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to

* Ver. 14.

† Ver. 16.

to this Sense, *Many of them who slept in the Dust of the Earth, shall awake* *. And the Apostle tells us, † *As in Adam all died, so in CHRIST shall all be made alive* †. And of this there is the same Evidence, as there is that *JESUS died and rose again.*

BESIDES, the Dead will be rais'd, *before the Living are chang'd.* This peculiar Circumstance is related, ver. 10. *For they who are alive, and remain unto the Coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them who are asleep.* The *Dead in Christ, will rise first*, ver. 16. They who have been dead many Ages of Time, and have lain long in the Grave, shall be first rais'd from the Dead, before the Living who remain upon the Earth at the Time of our LORD's Appearing, shall pass that Change which is equivalent to Death, or have glorified Bodies: *For, the Apostle says, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed* †. There will be no Disadvantage in this Respect to have died before others, or have lain long in the Grave; for the Dead will be first rais'd and restored to Life, and stand upon an equal Foot with those who survive, and remain alive. They will not *prevent them who sleep*, or be glorify'd before them. And this he tells them by the *Word of the Lord*; by special Direction and Revelation from Hea-

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* Dan. xii. 2. † 1 Cor. xv. 22. † 1 Cor. xv. 51.

ven. And elsewhere calls it upon that account, *a great Mystery : Behold, I shew you a Mystery, we shall not all sleep ; but we shall all be changed, in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye, the Dead shall be rais'd incorruptible, and we shall be changed **.

FARTHER, this will be done by the Sound of a Trumpet. *The LORD Himself shall descend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trumpet of GOD †. He will appear in a visible Glory, with the Shout of Holy Angels ; and the Voice of the Archangel will be like a Trumpet to summon the Dead together ; or, as the Tribes of Israel under the Law were summon'd together by the Sound of a Trumpet ||. Our Lord tells us, The Hour is coming in which all who are in their Graves shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth *. And more expressly, He shall send his Angels with a great Sound of a Trumpet, and they shall gather together his Elect from the Four Winds, from the one End of Heaven to the other †. And the Apostle tells us, At the last Trump, for the Trumpet shall sound, and the Dead shall be rais'd †.*

FINALLY, Both together will be caught up into the Clouds to meet the LORD in the Air. *Then we who are alive and remain, shall*
be

* 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. † 1 Theff. iv. 16. || Numb. x.

* John v. 28. † Matth. xxiv. 31. † 1 Cor. xv. 52.

be caught up together with them in the Clouds to meet the Lord in the Air *. We shall all be joyn'd together ; all surviving Believers, who remain upon Earth at the Great Day, and all those who were dead, and now rais'd again, shall be carry'd together, and in a Body, into the Air to meet the LORD, that is, in order to their own final Judgment, and to attend his Glorious Appearance, and be † Affessors with Him in the Judgment of the Wicked. They will make one collective Body, or united Society before the Presence of the Glorious Judge †.

THIS is wholly peculiar to the Gospel Revelation, what the Heathen World did not understand, and the Light of Nature was not sufficient to direct them to.

§. 2. BEING with the LORD. *And so shall we ever be with the LORD* †. This may be consider'd in the following Instances too. For Example :

THEY will be *present* with the LORD: In his immediate and glorious Presence ; For we *shall be with Him in Paradise*, and *in his Kingdom*, we shall be *present with the Lord*, and *be with Him and behold his Glory*. In a Place of the highest Happiness and greatest Glory, there will be so great a Near-

* 1 Cor. xv. 17. † Ibid. vi. 2. † Ib. ver. 17.

Nearness and Enjoyment, that the nearest Access at present is in Comparison absence and distance from Him. They will not lie at the Footstool, but stand before the Throne. They will be so near Him as to *see* Him, *know* Him in all the Dignity of his Person and Glory of his advanced State: And be admitted to the fullest Communion and Participation which their Natures are capable of, and their perfect Happiness makes necessary: they will be with Him as Friends and Companions, the Objects of his Favour and Partners of his Glory, with whom He will freely converse, and to whom He will graciously manifest himself; for *being with the Lord*, describes the Happiness of true Believers, and must needs import such a Presence with Him as is capable of making them happy, and proper to support their Happiness.

BESIDES, they will be *ever* with the LORD, it will be a constant everlasting Presence and Enjoyment, 'tis not for a short Duration or any limited Time, but perpetual and endless. He will never withdraw himself from them; for 'tis his Glory and Delight to have them with Him. *Father I will that those whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am* †. 'Tis a great Satisfaction

† John xvii. 24.

saction and Joy to all the heavenly Host to have every Believer with his LORD, every Member with its Head. If there is *Joy in Heaven*, and *among the Angels of God* over one *Sinner who repenteth*, there will be much more so, when another Member is added to the blessed Society above. And they will never depart from Him, they will never *leave their own Habitation*, as the sinning Angels did theirs, or like our first Parents, forfeit the heavenly Paradise. They will be confirmed in their happy State by Divine Grace, and be perfectly pleased; there will not be a single Defect or uneasy Thought, nor Room left for a Wish or Desire of more.

AGAIN, They will be with Him in *Body and Soul*: In their raised Body and glorified Soul, they will be compleat and entire in both Parts, exactly conformable to the glorious Body and Soul of their Redeemer, and suited to the Place and Happiness they are to partake of. In the mean Time they are only *present in Spirit*, but *absent in Body*: The Body lies in the Dust of Death, from the Time of their Dissolution to the Resurrection: 'Tis confin'd a Prisoner of the Grave, and under the Arrest of Death. The Sentence of the broken Law is executed upon them, and remains in Force: but then Death will properly *be abolished*, and
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He who *had the Power of Death destroyed.*
The raised Body will be united to the glorified Soul, and both together in full Perfection be *present with the Lord.*

FINALLY, This will commence at the Time of his appearing, and be the Consequence of it. *And so shall we ever be with the Lord, i. e. when the Lord shall come in the Clouds; when He shall descend from Heaven with a shout.* And this may be understood of the *Season or Cause* of it; it follows upon the Appearance of our LORD in the Order of Time; when the solemn Transaction of his glorious Appearance is over, then shall they all be gathered together in One, and *be for ever with the Lord:* and it not only follows upon it, but *flows* from it, there is something *Causal* in it as well as *Consequential.* When He has raised the Dead at his Appearance, and judged the World, He winds up the whole Matter, and finishes the great Undertaking, by taking Believers to himself; and *bringing the many Sons to Glory.* 'Tis the last Act of his Mediation, and compleats the whole Design.

II. WHAT Matter of *Comfort* these Considerations are proper to afford in such a Case: Or what use we are to make of them to this special Purpose, in the Death of godly Friends, or those who *sleep in Jesus.*

THE Comfort here spoken of plainly stands opposed to the *Excess* of Sorrow and the *Defect* of Hope, *sorrowing as others who have no Hope*, an immoderate Degree of Sorrow exclusive of a future Hope. And must accordingly be understood to lie between these two Extreams: 'Tis Something which is able to allay our Sorrow, and encourage our Hope. For tho' we are not to be insensible under afflictive Rebukes, and ought to be duly affected; yet we must not *abandon* ourselves to Grief, or sorrow without Measure we should reduce our Concern within proper Bounds, and set Limits to the most afflicting Grief. Nor ought we to be without Hope as if they were wholly lost, who die out of this World, and we were never to see them any more. We must encourage the Expectation of a future State, under present Losses and Grievs, and look beyond Death and the Grave for our Relief and Support.

NOW I reckon all the Comfort such a Case admits, *i. e.* of an absent Friend, or one at a Distance, is either the Consideration of their *own* State, and the Condition they themselves are in; or the Expectation of *being with them*, and partaking of their Happiness. Both these concur in the present Case, and are powerful Springs of Comfort. I shall represent them a little distinctly, with Reference to the special Case of our departed godly Friends.

§. I. CONSIDER the *Personal Glory* to which they will be advanc'd; or the Condition they will then be brought into. We may consider this in the double Instance here referr'd to.

(I.) THE Bodies in which they will be rais'd. The Bodies of the Saints in this World are frail and mortal. *We dwell in Houses of Clay, whose Foundation is in the Dust, and are crushed before the Moth* *: i. e. as a Garment is eaten with a Moth; or sooner than a Moth. The *earthly House of our Tabernacle* will quickly be dissolved †. They are *earthen Vessels*, made out of the Dust of the Earth, and liable to be broken to pieces, and crumbled into Dust again.

BUT their Bodies at the Resurrection will be quite other Kind of Things, and rais'd to greater Advantage. We find a particular Description in the Apostle, *So also is the Resurrection of the Body: 'Tis sown in Corruption, 'tis raised in Incorruption. 'Tis sown in Dishonour, 'tis raised in Glory. 'Tis sown in Weakness, 'tis raised in Power. 'Tis sown a natural Body, 'tis raised a spiritual Body* †. The Expression of *Sowing* must be understood to refer to the Rise and Origin of the Body, as well as to its Dissolution; to its State and Condition in

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this

* Job iv. 19. † 1 Cor. v. 1. † Ib. xv. 41.

this World, as well as that in the Grave and so much his Allusion to *Seed* sown, and to *Adam's* being made a *living Soul*, as well as the Properties themselves ascrib'd to it, do necessarily suppose. Nor must the Apostle be understood here to speak of the *Substance* and Matter of the Body, which will be the same; but of the Form and *Qualities* of it which will be chang'd. For Example:

'Tis sown in *Corruption*: 'Tis here in this World a *mortal Body*, subject to Dissolution and will see *Corruption* in the Grave. For 'tis made of contrary Principles, and carries the Seeds of *Mortality* in its Nature; and is under the Sentence of Death, and must necessarily return to Dust. But it will then be *incorruptible*; not subject to present Decays, or final Dissolution. It will commence Immortal like the Spirit to which it belongs; without any Principles of Corruption within, and deliver'd from the Sentence of Death. *The Dead shall be raised incorruptible; for this Corruptible shall put on Incorruption, and this mortal shall put on Immortality* †. And our Lord tells us, *But they who are found worthy to obtain that World and the Resurrection from the Dead, neither marry nor are given in Marriage; neither can they die any more; for they are equal to the Angels and are the Children of God, being the Children of*

† 1 Cor. xv. 52.

the Resurrection *. 'Tis sown in *Dishonour*: It has now dishonourable Parts; the Apostle speaks of the *Members of the Body, which are less honourable*, and of our *uncomely Parts* †. And the dead Body is vile and offensive; we are glad to bury it under-Ground, and put it out of our Sight, tho' never so lovely and desirable before; as *Abraham* did by his beautiful and beloved *Sarah*. So 'tis call'd the *vile Body* ||, or the Body of our humble State. But it will be rais'd in *Glory*, beautiful and lovely, like the *living Soul*, form'd out of the Dust of the Earth *. They will appear in just Symmetry, and in a lovely Form, without any natural Deformity, or accidental Defect, and shine with an illustrious and surprizing Glory, rais'd out of the *Rottenness* of the Grave, and from the Company of *Worms*, and fitted for the Blessedness of *Heaven*, and Injoyment of the Blessed God. They will shine as the *Brightness of the Firmament*, and as the *Stars* for ever and ever †. Yea, the *Righteous* will shine as the *Sun in the Kingdom of their Father* ‡. 'Tis sown in *Weakness*: The Body is now subject to the Fatigue of Labour, Decay of Time, and Injury of Accident and Disease; and it will drop into the Grave under its own Weight, and thro' the Infirmities which attend

* Luke xx. 35. † 1 Cor. xi. 23. || Phil. iii. 21.

* Gen. ii. 7. † Dan. xii. 3. ‡ Matth. xiii. 48.

tend it, not able to sustain the Burden of Nature, or support itself any longer in Being; nor to resist the Corruption of the Grave, or the feeble Efforts of a crawling Worm. But they will be rais'd in *Power*: With full Vigor of Nature, and endow'd with extraordinary Strength, able to preserve itself without Decay, and capable of the proper Offices of its glorify'd State. Finally, 'Tis sown a *natural* Body; or rather an *animal* * Body: Our Bodies in this World consist of Flesh and Blood, suitable to this earthly and sensible State, quickned and acted by a living Soul, supported with constant Supplies of Food and Air, like other Animals; and subject to all the Weakness and Misery of the Animal Life, to the Passions and Pains, the Changes and Accidents of all natural Things. But it will be rais'd a *spiritual* Body †, endowed with a proper Life of its own, and able to subsist without any Foreign Aid; or refin'd from gross Matter and earthly Alloy, approaching nearer the Perfection of Spirits, pure and active, a fit Companion and Instrument of

* Ψυχικόν. † Ἐν ᾧ ἡ ψυχὴ τὸ κύριον καὶ τὴν ἡγεμονίαν ἔχει. Oecum. Σῶμα Ψυχικόν ἐστὶν ὅτι τοῖς ψυχικοῖς ὑπερβίησας πάθεσι πνευματικόν ὅτι ἐ τοῖς ψυχικοῖς ὑπερβίησει παθήμασι. Phot. apud Oecum.
 Ἡ τὸ χορὴν πᾶσαν τὴν ἀγίαν πνεύματι τὴν ἐνέργειαν καὶ κοινωνίαν. Meth. apud Oecum. Ὅτι κρῶτερον ἐστὶ καὶ λεπτοτερον καὶ οἶον καὶ ἐπ' αἴρι οὐχ ἁπλῶς. Chrysost.

a glorified Soul. Or possess'd and acted by the Holy Spirit, a *living Temple* of the Holy Ghost, and a fit Inhabitant and Votary of the *Temple* of GOD above. *Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven*, and 'tis here called the *Heavenly*; and elsewhere, *It gave the House which is from Heaven **, or of an heavenly Make and Materials.

THE Apostle represents the Excellence of the raised Body in one general Character: *Who shall change our vile Bodies that they may be fashioned like his glorious Body, according to the Working whereby He is able to subdue all Things to himself †. i. e.* It will be suitable to its Pattern, and answerable to its Cause; the glorious *Body* of the Redeemer; and mighty *Power* of GOD. And if His Body appeared so glorious at the *Transfiguration*, that his *Face shone as the Sun, and his Raiment was white as the Light ||*, how excellent and bright must the glorified Body of the Redeemer appear in Heaven:

AND now let us pause a while, and consider what Comfort may be derived from hence. Our present Bodies are often inconvenient and uneasy Habitations to the Soul, like an House decaying and out of Repair. We *groan* under the Burden of a mortal Body, 'tis the Seat of grievous *Distempers*, and
afflicting

* 2 Cor. v. 2. † Phil. iii. ult. || Matth. xvii. 2.

afflicting *Accidents*. The *Psalmist* in Allusion to this represents the Distress of a guilty Soul by *broken Bones*; and the Apostle speaks of the *Thorn in the Flesh*. 'Tis the subject of present Suffering: The Apostle bore in his Body the *Marks of the Lord Jesus* *: Scarrs of Honour by sufferings for CHRIST; and often speaks of *Stripes and Scourging, Bonds and Imprisonments, being stoned, sawn asunder, killed with the Sword* †. 'Tis often a Clog and Snare, a great Hindrance to the lively actings of Grace, and spiritual Exercises; and an Instrument and Occasion of Sin. Bodily Appetites are often unruly, and the Prevalence of the sensual Nature is a Burden under which the best of Men sometimes groan. Hence the Apostle so pathetically exclaims; *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Death* *: And found it necessary to *keep under his Body and bring it in Subjection* *. Sin is said to reign in our mortal Body †. And the unrenew'd Nature is often represented by the *Flesh, the Members, Deeds of the Body, &c.*

BUT then we shall be delivered from every Burden of the present Body: There will be no Disease of Nature, or Decay of Sense; no pining Sicknes, or racking Pain,
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* Gal. vi. 17. † Heb. xi. 37. * Rom. vii. 25.

* 2 Cor. ix. 27.

† Rom. vi. 12.

no more a dim Eye, or a trembling Hand, or an aking Head; nothing to disturb the Order of Nature, or hinder its Repose. There will be no Injury or Oppression from any Hand of Violence or Accident of Evil: *The Wicked cease from troubling, and the Weary are at rest* *. Sin and Suffering will end together, as they began together, *God will wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying, nor any more Pain, for former Things are pass'd away* †. They will be no longer a Hindrance in our Way, or Occasion of Sin, there will be no tedious attendance upon Health, or painful Methods of Cure; no Escapes from present Fatigues, or Refreshment and Diversion of Life. There will be no vicious and unruly Appetite to curb and restrain, no melancholy Fumes and Vapours to darken and disturb the Mind; no dead and drowsy Frame, or Listlessness or Weariness in the Service of G O D. Yea, they will be quite the *Reverse* of their present State. The glorified Body will be advanced and improved to all the Perfection, and all the Glory which the bodily Nature is capable of: They will be more healthy, more beautiful, more active, more lasting, then ever they were in this World. And how blessed a Change

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will

* Job iii. 17.

† Rev. xxi. 4.

will this make, and how pleasing a Prospect, and sensible a Relief may it give, under the Remembrance of the Pain and Distress of their pass'd Lives, and last Moments, their living Sorrows, and their dying Agonies and Groans.

(2.) THE *Happiness* they will possess. The entire Person, Body and Soul will be completely bless'd, in the Presence of CHRIST, or *being with Him*. This may be considered in the following Particulars according to the Scripture Representation, and will be so many farther Grounds of Comfort in the Case.

I. THERE is an immediate *Sight* of his Glory without present Distance and Darkeness. Much of their Sorrow and Trouble in this World arises from their Distance and Separation from their LORD, many Clouds of Darkeness often interpose, many discouraging Fears, and uneasy Thoughts, spring up in their Mind. But then they will be brought to a nearer Sight and immediate Presence of his Glory. This is a constant Description of the heavenly State. *If any Man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall also my Servant be* *. *I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also* †. This was our Lord's Prayer

* John xii. 26.

† Ib. xiv. 3.

Prayer for his Disciples, *Father, I will that those also whom Thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory, which Thou hast given me **.

THEY will be brought to the same Place where CHRIST Himself is, and be locally present with Him in his glorify'd State. He is gone to prepare a Place for them among the Mansions of his FATHER'S House; and He will come again to receive them unto Himself. He is returned into his Glory, and they will have an Entrance administred to them into His everlasting Kingdom. He sits upon a glorious Throne, and shines in the Perfections of the DEITY; redeem'd from all the Meanness and Reproach in which He appear'd in the World; and they stand round his Throne, and sit down with Him on his Right Hand, and on his Left, in his Kingdom. He is attended with glorious Hosts of Holy Angels, who bow before Him, and do his Will; and they are joyn'd to the innumerable Company of Angels, and bear their Part in the common Service and Praise.

So the Apostle represents the Matter: *For now we see through a Glass darkly, but then Face to Face; now I know but in part, but then I shall know, even as I am also known †. And, We shall see Him as He is ‡. They have now only a*

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* John xvii. 24. † 1 Cor. xiii. 12. ‡ 1 John iii. 2.

distant View of CHRIST in the Glass of his Word, and the Ordinances of Worship, in the lively Exercises of Faith, and a rais'd and spiritual Frame of Mind; but then they shall behold Him as *Moses* did, *Face to Face*: Which imports the nearest Access, and most familiar Converse. The Vail will be drawn aside, and they will behold Him just as He is. They will stand in the Presence-Chamber of the King of Heaven, and gaze on his resplendent Glory. Their Eyes *behold the King in his Beauty* *, *advanc'd to the highest Dignity, and possess'd of the highest Glory.*

IF our Lord could tell his Disciples here on Earth, *Blessed are your Eyes, for they see; and your Ears, for they hear; and many Prophets and righteous Men have desired to see what you have seen, and have not seen them; and hear what you have heard, and have not heard them* †: How much more blessed are they who see *what Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man* †: And with the Apostle, are *caught up into the third Heaven, and hear unspeakable Words, which 'tis not lawful for a Man to utter* *; or possible for any Mortal to apprehend or express.

2. PERFECT *Likeness* to Him, without any Weakness or Defect. 'Tis the Glory of our

* Isa. xxxiii. 17.

† Matth. xiii. 16.

* 1 Cor. ii. 9.

† 2 Cor. xii. 4.

our present Natures, to bear some Likeness to CHRIST, and have his Image renew'd upon our Souls; but there is a great Degree of *Dissimilitude* and Unlikeness to Him remaining. They often complain of the *Body* of *this Death*, as well as of the *mortal Body*. How unlike are the best Saints on Earth, the most enlighten'd and improv'd, to the final Perfection or the *Patterns of Things in the Heavens* *!

BUT now the immediate Sight of the Glorified REDEEMER, will transform them into a perfect Likeness to Him. So 'tis represented; *I shall behold Thy Face in Righteousness—and awake with Thy Likeness* †. i. e. in the Morning of the Resurrection. *Beloved, now are we the Sons of God; but it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is* *. It carries a transforming Power with it, and produces a wonderful Effect; a sinless Likeness and Conformity to him. We shall be as like him as we are capable of being. Our whole Nature will be purify'd and exalted to its highest Perfection, and bear the exact Image and Resemblance of the Blessed JESUS. Our *Bodies* will be *fashioned* after his *Glorious Body*, and be a bright Copy of the Divine Original; and our
Souls

* Heb. ix. 23. † Psal. xvii. ult. * 1 John iii. 2.

Souls like his, in holy Dispositions and heavenly Qualities ; in the Perfection of our Knowledge, and Purity of Love. The glorify'd Person will receive an *Impression*, like that of the Seal upon the Wax, or the Image of the Mould into which any Thing is cast.

IF Conversing with GOD a little while upon the Mount, made *Moses's Face to shine*, so that he put a *Vail upon his Face*, while he spake to the People* ; as if Conversing with GOD had render'd him unfit for humane Converse ; what a Glory must it give to those who *always behold the Face of GOD* ? If *Stephen*, full of Faith and of the Holy Ghost, by looking *steadfastly to Heaven*, and seeing the Glory of God, and *Jesus standing at the Right Hand of God* ; appear'd to them who sat in Council with his Face as if it had been the Face of an Angel †, with how bright a Countenance will they appear, who *always stand before the Throne of GOD* ? If the present Glory of the Gospel is so lively, that with *open Face beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord*, we are *changed into the same Image, from Glory unto Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord* ‡ ; how much more powerful and efficacious must the Glory of Heaven be, and the immediate Sight of GOD.

3. THE

* Exod. xxix. 33. † Acts vi. 15. ‡ 1 Cor. viii. 18.

3. THE highest Joy without any Alloy of Sorrow. Good Men in this World possess the truest Joy: They have Comforts which the *World knows not of*, and *Strangers intermeddle not with their Joy* *. Our Lord appear'd concern'd for his Followers, that their Joy *might remain*, and that it might *be full* †. But there are many Alloys of their present Joy; sometimes a bitter Cup is put into their Hands, a *Cup of Trembling and Astonishment*; or a bitter Drop is mingled with a Cup of Consolation, which gives a great Alloy, if it don't embitter all the rest. They are often sorrowful and sad under their present Burdens, or the Fear of future Evil.

BUT in the Presence of their LORD there is no Sorrow, but *Fulness of Joy*. In Thy Presence is *Fulness of Joy*, at Thy Right Hand are Pleasures for evermore *. And, I shall behold Thy Face in Righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy Likeness †. There is a mighty Satisfaction arises from the immediate Sight of CHRIST, and perfect Likeness to Him. They are infinitely pleas'd with the *exceeding Glory* round about them, and the perfect Rectitude of their own Nature. Their *Meetness* for Heaven is Matter of everlasting *Thanksgiving* to the FATHER *. They are said to enter into the Joy

* Rev. xiv. 10. † John xvi. 22. * Psal. xvi. ult.

* Psal. xvii ult.

Joy of their Lord *. 'Tis a State of Joy which they must *enter into*, and will become the Element in which they breath. And *when his Glory shall be revealed, they shall be glad with exceeding Joy* †: Exceeding all other Joys, beyond what they ever found before, or are able to represent to others. Or exceeding all the Expectations, and all the Capacities of their Souls; an overflowing Joy, or more than they can contain. They will be as full of Joy as they are able to hold, without any Mixture of Sorrow with it; the most refin'd and exalted Joy, without any Check to their Pleasure, or Damp upon their Minds; any Danger of Excess, or Fear of Sin.

IF the Disciples were *glad* when they saw a *risen Lord*, and He *shewed them his Hands and his Feet* ||: What Gladness will it give them to see the ascended and *glorified* REDEEMER? Will not their *Joy be fulfilled*, when they see the *Lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the Throne*? If there is *Joy and Peace* in Believing; in the distant Prospect and Expectation; what must be the Joy of Sight and Enjoyment? If by *loving Him whom we have not seen*, and *believing on Him, tho' now we see Him not*, we *rejoyce with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory* *; how unspeakable and glorious must the Joy

* Matth. xxv. 21. † 1 Pet. i. 14. || Joh. xx. 20.

* 1 Pet. i. 8.

Joy be which arises from a seen JESUS, when we shall see him as He is, and behold his Glory!

4. EVERLASTING Continuance, or Duration without End. They will be *for ever with the Lord*. The Happiness they will possess will be eternal. And tho' this is only a Circumstance of it; yet 'tis of the greatest Importance, and adds unspeakable Weight to all the rest. If it were limited, tho' to never so long a Distance; and were to alter and cease, after never so long an Enjoyment, it would lessen the Glory, and abate the Pleasure all the while. The Thought of leaving it at last, would damp the Pleasure of the highest Enjoyment, and make the Trouble and Disappointment the greater at last. To leave so long an Enjoyment, and be turn'd out of the Delights of the heavenly Paradise, would give the deepest and most afflicting Grief.

BUT now 'tis a great Addition to all the other Considerations of their Happiness, that it will never end: *The Righteous go into Life eternal, and enter into the everlasting Kingdom*. They will never be separated from the glorious Presence of CHRIST. The General Assembly will never dissolve and break up. There will be no Interruption or End to the joyful Praise, and perfect Service of that blessed State. And it must needs be so: For there is no Period set to it by the Divine Will: The Promises of the Gospel are every where of *eternal Life* *; and

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* 1 John ii. 25.

they are made *Pillars in the Temple of God*, and shall go no more out †. It will not be in the Power of any Enemy to disturb them; for they are out of the Reach of tempting Objects, and every envious and malignant Power. No foul Fiend can enter into the heavenly Paradise, or endanger a new Defection there. If the Apostle could triumph in this World over all his Enemies, *Who shall separate from the Love of Christ* ‡? How much more will they be able to do it then, when their *Warfare is accomplished*, and the Victory compleat? And it will never decay or wax old: For 'tis an *Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and never fadeth away*. There is no Principle of Corruption in the heavenly Happiness, as there is in all the Happiness of this World, which gradually declines, and *perishes in the using*: The Moth cannot corrupt, any more than the Thief break thro' and steal. Yea, it will grow and improve, and be ever fresh and new. The Sun of Glory will never set, or suffer an Eclipse; there's no Cloud to intercept its Light. 'Tis fix'd in the Meridian of the highest Heavens, and shines with an equal and everlasting Lustre. The continual Displays of unknown Perfections will yield a fresh Admiration and Delight to all Eternity.

LET US view the Matter in this Light: What a Comfort is their future Happiness proper to inspire

† Rom. viii. ult.

‡ Rev. iii. 12.

inspire a sad and sorrowful Heart? If we reckon it a great Satisfaction, that 'tis well with our absent Friends, in a foreign Country or remote Place; that They enjoy perfect Health, prosper in their Affairs, and are advanc'd to Honours; how much greater Reason of Comfort should it be, that those we love and esteem, tho' they are now remov'd and at a Distance from us, will be rais'd to so great a Glory, and possess so high a Happiness: That tho' they drop'd their Bodies in the Dust in their Ascent to Heaven, as *Elijah* did his Mantle, and *Worms* destroy their Body; yet *in their Flesh they shall see God*; and tho' they see *Man no more on Earth with the Inhabitants of the World*; yet they always behold the Face of CHRIST, and find an infinite and everlasting Pleasure in perfect Likeness, and full Enjoyment of Him.

§. 2. WE have thus far consider'd the *Personal* Glory to which they will be advanc'd: We are now to consider the *Share* we shall bear with them. This is of mighty Account in the Case too. The Apostle makes the *Resurrection* of the Body, and *Being* with the LORD, the common Happiness of all true Christians; 'tis the *State* of them who *sleep in Jesus*. So shall WE ever be with the Lord. We, as well as They, and together with Them. This implies Two Things full of Consolation.

I. THAT we shall *be with* them. We shall

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know

know them, and enjoy them again, and to greater Advantage. 'Tis reasonable to suppose that we shall know our departed Friends in the other World, especially after the Resurrection, when the glorified Soul will be united to its own Body, which will probably retain its proper Form.

IF we can suppose it capable of contributing to our Satisfaction, or being any Ingredient in our Happiness, to converse with our departed Friends; we shall certainly do so: For there will be nothing wanting to the Perfection of our Blessedness: And I think there can be no reasonable Doubt but it will. What is so suitable to a *social* Nature, and so sensible a Delight in this World, will not surely cease to be, or signify nothing in the other: Tho' all fond Regards arising from the lower Considerations of present *Relations*, or mere natural *Instinct*, will wholly cease in that refin'd State.

THERE are several Intimations in Scripture to this Purpose. We shall know the glorified REDEEMER in Heaven; the human Nature of the Lord JESUS will be distinguish'd by peculiar Marks; for He will appear as a *Lamb slain in the midst of the Throne*. Heaven is represented as a *General Assembly*, a Universal Congregation and Meeting together; among the Rest there will be the *Spirits of Just Men made perfect* *: An Assembly of Persons altogether

unknown

unknown to one another, would rather gaze and wonder than communicate Sentiments, or maintain a pleasurable Converse. *Peter, James and John*, knew *Moses and Elias* upon the Mount †, tho' they had never seen one another before, and the Distance of Time in which they liv'd was so great. The Rich Man knew *Abraham*, tho' one was in Heaven and the other in Hell. The Angels rejoyce at a Sinner's Conversion, tho' *They* are in Heaven, and *We* on Earth. And we shall sit down with *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven* ‡. If we shall know them then, whom we never saw in this World, whether that will be by immediate Revelation, or by any Signature they wear, or Mark of Distinction; shall we not much more know them who were most intimate to us in this World, and with whom we often took sweet Counsel together? And it must needs be to infinite Advantage that we shall see and enjoy them in that perfect State, without any present Defect or sinful Weakness in Body or Soul, which often lessens the Comfort of present Enjoyment between the nearest Relations, and the dearest Friends. We shall see them rais'd and improv'd to the highest Perfection, and the greatest Happiness. If we were never to meet again, and Death made an everlasting Separation, it would be more uncomfortable and afflicting; as the Elders

wept

† Matth. xvii.

‡ Matth. viii. 11.

wept sore, and fell on Paul's Neck, and kiss'd him; sorrowing most of all for the Words which he spake, That they should see his Face no more *. But how seasonable a Relief does this afford, *That they only depart for a Season, that we may receive them for ever* *?

2. THAT We shall partake with Them in all their Happiness. And this makes it still a more comfortable Consideration. For tho' 'tis a great Satisfaction to *bear* of the Welfare and Prosperity of our absent Friends, when we are never the better for it, or are in a different Circumstance of Things ourselves; yet 'tis an unspeakable Addition to it, to partake of their Honours, and share in their Joys; to be with them, and to be like them in their Prosperity and Advancement.

THIS is the Case here, *We shall be rais'd up in Glory, and be for ever with the Lord, together with them. We shall be Sharers with them in all the Glory and Blessedness of the heavenly State, as we are now Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life* †. We shall see the LORD, and be like Him, and rejoyce for ever with Him, as well as they, and in Society with them. It will not lessen the heavenly Blessedness, or move an uneasy Passion, that others enjoy it as well as We, or that 'tis shar'd among so Many; 'twill heighten the Satisfaction, the more

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* Acts xx. 30. † Philemon 15. † Eph. ii. 19.

'tis diffus'd: Each one's Happiness will increase another's, and add considerably to the Whole. So the Apostle represents it, *God having provided some better Thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect**: The final Perfection of the heavenly Blessedness requires all the Heirs of Glory; and there is some sort of Defect, and 'tis incomplete while any Member is absent or wanting. The *Vail* of the heavenly Temple will be *rent in twain*, which separates the outward Court from the Holiest of all: We shall *enter within the Vail*. The *Wall of Partition* will be taken down, which now parts the Family of God, and all will appear in a Body, and be always present together. And what a Fountain of Consolation is this; that we shall ever be happy together. It may be we have been often Sorrowing and Mourning together in this World under a like Disease of Nature and Exercise of Mind; engag'd in like Conflicts, and struggling with the same Difficulties of Life; but then *all Tears shall be wip'd away*, and we shall rejoice together, and be happy together for ever. What a Joy was it to the aged *Patriarch*, to hear that *Joseph* was alive, and advanced in *Egypt*? 'tis said his *heart fainted and he believed them not* †, but when he saw the Waggon, his Spirit *reviv'd*, and he said, *It is enough, Joseph my Son is yet alive*. And when *Joseph* met him in *Goshen*,
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* Heb. ix. 40. † Gen. xlv.

and presented himself to him, and he fell on his Neck and kissed him: When he saw him in all his Glory, and shar'd with him in the Prosperity of his exalted State, he expresses himself with a Transport of Joy, after his Mourning for him many Days, and refusing to be comforted: And Israel said to Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy Face, because thou art yet alive.

BUT it may be said here; That tho' this is Matter of Comfort indeed in such a Case; yet it is *remote* and distant. All this relates only to their Happiness after the Resurrection of the Body, and at the Appearance of the LORD JESUS CHRIST: But what is their *present* State, *who sleep in Jesus*, between the Time of their Death and Resurrection? Is there no Comfort to be drawn from the Consideration of the State they are *now* in? I answer briefly in the following Particulars, which will open a fresh Spring of Consolation in this Case.

I. THEY are *now* present with the LORD. 'Tis true their Happiness will not be compleat till the Resurrection, and their being with the LORD in Soul and Body. And to this the Contexture of the Apostle's Discourse has all along confin'd us. But then it must be consider'd, That tho' the Body sleep in the Dust till the Morning of the Resurrection, yet the Soul is with CHRIST immediately upon

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the Dissolution. They are already happy in their best Part, and in the noblest Kind, tho' not in the highest Degree; and 'tis not wholly deferr'd till the Time of the Resurrection.

I CANNOT allow the Remark of a late Interpreter *, who reckons the Words of the foregoing Verse to carry an Intimation, That we were not *before* with the LORD. For the Scripture represents the present State of good Men in the other World in the same Terms by which the final Happiness is represented, *This Day thou shalt be with me in Paradise* †. The Apostle makes it the immediate Consequence of a Dissolution; *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord* ||. And 'tis the Reason of his Desire to depart, and leave a State of present Service and Enjoyment; *Having a Desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better* ‡.

EVERY true Believer is *immediately* with the LORD: They are now with Him from the Time of their Absence and Departure. As soon as ever they depart from their Friends, and are absent from the Body, they are present with the LORD, beholding his Glory, conform'd to his Likeness, and rejoicing in his Love; tho' it will no doubt be more improv'd, and more compleat hereafter. 'Tis

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* *Whitby in Loc.*

† *Luke xxiii. 43.*

|| *2 Cor. v. 8.*

‡ *Phil. i. 23.*

now with them as they could wish; and they enjoy the greatest Desire of their Heart. They are perfectly satisfy'd with their present State and would not come down into the World again. They would not leave the Realms of Light and Joy, for this dark and distressful World; nor the Presence of their LORD, for the Company of the dearest Friends on Earth. A late excellent Person could say upon his dying-Bed, That he would not be Four and Twenty Hours from the Presence of his LORD for the Sake of a near Relation, who was yet dearest to him in all the World.

AND should not we be comforted concerning our departed Friends, considering the present Happiness of their State, and what they immediately enjoy, and be comforted in the Comfort, and exceedingly the more rejoice, for the Joy with which their Spirits are refreshed? Should we disagree with them now, with whom, it may be, we have always agreed, or be uneasy at their Advancement, and grieve at that which gives them the greatest Satisfaction, and is the Reason of their highest Joy?

2. THE Relation wherein we stand to them at Death dissolves the Relations of this World. At the Natural and Civil Relations of Life cease. 'Tis our late Relation and Friend; for in strict Propriety, they are no longer such. The

last no longer than *till Death do us part*. But the *Spiritual* Relation remains still, and is never dissolv'd; for they stand related to GOD as their Father, and are the Members of CHRIST. They are alive to him, tho' dead to us: *He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; He is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living; for all live to Him **. They live a more noble and excellent kind of Life; and He stands related to their dead Dust, and will raise it up again. They remain the Children of GOD, and living Members of the glorified REDEEMER in Heaven: They are the *Children of God, being the Children of the Resurrection*.

UPON this Consideration the Apostle tells us, *For this Cause I bow my Knee to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named †*: All the Children of GOD make up one Family, Part of which is here *below*, and Part *above*. The Family above consists of Angels and glorified Saints; but they are the *same* Family, and bear a common Name, tho' they are of the upper House, and advanc'd to higher Stations. Our departed Friends are in our Father's House, tho' in a higher Mansion there. They are Children of the same Family, tho' like elder Children, or those grown to Age, they have enter'd upon the Inheritance. When the Apo-

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* Luke xx. 37, 38. † Eph. iii. 14, 15.

He describes the heavenly State by an innumerable Company of *Angels*, the general Assembly, and Church of the First-born, and Spirits of *Just Men made perfect*; he says, *Ye ARE come to Mount Sion, the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.* Which can reasonably import nothing less than, "Ye stand related to them, ye belong to the blessed Society, and really partake with them already. Ye are now ally'd to Angels and departed Spirits."

So that the spiritual Relation continues between Us: They are our Christian Brethren, and Fellow-Members. We have *One Father*, and are *named* by the same Lord, *their Lord, and our Lord.* Angels are *Fellow-Servants, and Brethren of them who keep the Sayings of this Book* *. The Change of State, and Distance of Condition don't alter this Relation, tho' it dissolves all other. And how comfortable is it to think of our departed Friends under this Consideration; That tho' they are remov'd out of the World, and from our Sight, yet they are not wholly lost to Us; They are *Ours*, still in the highest and most valuable Relation in which we stood to them; the Children of the same Family, and Members of the same LORD. They are *Ours* in *Abraham's Bosom*, and Parts of *Ourselves* now glorified in Heaven.

3. THE Concern we had with them in this World.

* Rev. xxii. 9.

World. If we were serviceable to them, or they to us, in the Way to Heaven. If they were our natural or spiritual Off-spring, the Fruit of our Loyns, or the Children of our Faith. If we have brought them forth, or brought them up for Heaven. If of the Fruit of our Loyns, according to the Flesh, GOD has rais'd up an *holy Seed* to Himself, and we have the great Joy to see our Children walking in the Truth *: 'Tis an high Honour to bring forth a Child of GOD, and breed an Heir of Glory.

AND this comes with peculiar Advantage, if we have been the Instruments of their new Birth, and have begotten them again thro' the Gospel. If as Parents or Ministers, or Christian Friends, We have had a Hand in training 'em up for Glory. Especially if several considerations concur, and we have bore a various Part; if GOD has own'd our Instructions and Counsels for the first awaking of their Minds, directing them in their Course, encouraging them in their Difficulties, satisfying their Doubts, and ministring to their Establishment and Joy. If they receiv'd either the first Lineaments, or last Finishing from our Hands. The Apostle speaks of such a Case; *For what is our Hope, or Joy, or Crown of Rejoycing, are not even ye in the Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his Coming? For ye are our Glory, and our Joy* †. And doubtless it ought to be a great Satisfaction

* 3 John 4.

† 1 Thess. ii. 19.

tion at present to consider, That such are safely arriv'd to Heaven thro' our Means, or by our Help ; that We have been made the Instruments of their Being in this World, and their Blessedness in the other too.

OR if they were such whom We have got Good by : Our Fathers in CHRIST ; concerning whom we may say ; *Tho' we had many Instructors in Christ, yet not many Fathers ; for in Christ Jesus they have begotten as through the Gospel **. They were the great Instruments of a saving Change, or spiritual Edification. They are now in Heaven whom God own'd to do so much Good to my Soul : My *Parent* or *Pastor*, or *Friend*, to whom I owe more than to any Creature. They rest from the Labour of Life, and receive their Reward in Heaven ; *rejoyce in the Travail of their Soul*, and possess the *Joy of their Lord*! Tho' We have lost the Opportunity of farther Advantage by them, and shall no more receive the Benefit of their Counsels and Warnings ; yet *They* have received the Commendation of their Faithfulness : and the Good we have gained by them, will add to their Satisfaction and Reward, increase their Pleasure, and add to their Weight of Glory.

4. THE *Shortness* of the Distance and Separation. If we were not to be with them till the Resurrection, it would not be a great while,

* 1 Cor. iv. 15.

while, considering the long Duration and Continuance of their Happiness, and judging of Things by God's Account ; for *a Thousand Years are with the Lord but as one Day: and the End of all Things is at Hand.* We read expressly, *He who shall come, will come, and will not tarry. And, Behold I come quickly.*

BUT if it appear irksome and tedious to wait so long, and we should be ready to think it an Age of Absence from our beloved and glorify'd Friends ; Why then we are to consider, That We shall be with Them in their present Happiness, as soon as We leave this World. And how short a Distance is that? The whole Compass of Life in this World is but a short Space ; *Our Days are but a Hand's breadth.* And it may be a great part of Life is already run-out ; Perhaps We have lived the best and longest Time of our Lives in this World ; Why then we are so much the nearer them, by all the Time we have lived in this World : For *our Salvation is nearer than when we first believed.*

YOU may be with your departed Friends in a little time, and sooner than you think of. Comfort thyself with this Thought, That in a little while you shall see them again, and enjoy them for ever. A few more Days of Absence in this World, and we shall go to them and be where they are. A few more Sabbath-Days on Earth, and we shall come

to the Rest which *remaineth for the People of God*, and keep a glorious everlasting Sabbath together above. We shall be actually joyned to the *General Assembly* to which we now relate, and which shall never dissolve and break up; We shall joyn in the Praise, and partake of the Blessedness which they possess.

III. APPLICATION.

I. WE may learn the great *Excellence* of the Gospel Dispensation, which affords such powerful Reliefs under the Sorrows and Afflictions of Life. How much happier are we in this Respect than the Heathen World, who had only the Light of Nature and natural Considerations to support and comfort them. The *Philosophers* fetched their Consolations against the Fear of Death, and Sorrow for the Dead, from moral Considerations and the Reason of Things; and many of them were excellent in their Kind, and had their proper Use: But a Christian fetches his Comfort from the *Scriptures*, and such Considerations which they knew nothing of: *That we through Patience and Comfort of the Scripture might have Hope* *. The Gospel opens new Springs of Consolation, and surer Grounds of Hope, without the Mixtures of Mistake, Uncertainty and Fear, which the wisest Heathens

* Rom. xv. 4.

Heathens often betray'd in their boldest Flights of Expression, and highest Sallies of Assurance.

How much have we the Advantage of *former* Dispensations of the Divine Will, when the future Glory was obscurely reveal'd, in dark and general Hints, like the Types and Figures of the Sacrifice of CHRIST? The Resurrection of the Body, and the eternal Life of the other World, are the peculiar Glory of the Gospel Revelation. *He hath abolished Death, and brought Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel* *: Brought it out of its former Obscurity, and plac'd it in a fuller Light.

AND this furnishes more powerful Supports, and proper Grounds of Comfort, under the darkest Appearance of Providence, and the worst Circumstance of Life; as the Loss of the dearest Friend, or the greatest Affliction which befalls us. And upon this Account, as well as upon others, the Ministration of the Spirit is *rather glorious, and exceeds in Glory*. Yea, *Even that which was made glorious, had no Glory in this respect, by reason of the Glory that excelleth* †. The clearer Discoveries of the Gospel Revelation, darkened the dim Light, and drew a Vail over the fainter Glory of the Law; as the brighter Light obscures the less. And in Allusion to this, the Apostle says, *That Moses put a Vail*

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* 2 Tim. i. 10.

† 2 Cor. iii. 9, 10.

over his Face, that the Children of Israel could not look stedfastly to the End of that which is abolished; but we all with open Face behold as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord *. This should raise our Esteem of the lively Oracles, and direct the Use of them. We should value the high Privilege, and improve the great Advantage, especially to those Purposes to which 'tis peculiarly fitted and design'd; to bear Afflictions with Composure, and submit to the Hand of God with Silence, to restrain unruly Passions, and support and relieve our Minds under the greatest Losses and Sorrows of Life.

2. THE Unreasonableness of immoderate Sorrow for the Dead; especially for Godly Friends departed. It was this Caution occasion'd the whole Discourse; But I would not have you ignorant, Brethren, concerning them who are asleep †; concerning their State in the other World, that you sorrow not, even as others who have no Hope, i. e. with Excess and Despair, as the Heathens do *, who have no Hope

* Ver. 13, 18.

† Ver. 13.

* Some suppose the Apostle refers to the Jewish Zealots, who were very pompous in their Funeral Sorrows, and thought that none but circumcis'd Israelites could have any Share in the Happiness of Heaven; and that the Christians had no more Hope than the Heathens. The Epicureans and Sadducees had no Expectation of a future State; and the Pharisees among the Jews, and the Platonists among the Philosophers, had not the Christian Hope, and were liable to more Uncertainty.

Hope of a Resurrection, or certain Knowledge of a future State. They howl and lament over the Dead, abandon themselves to inconsolable Grief, as tho' they were lost forever, who are once departed out of the World; and there were no Hope left of their future Being, or any farther Enjoyment of them.

HE does not forbid them all Sorrow for the Dead; that were *unnatural* and impossible. The Affection of Grief, as well as Joy, is planted in our Nature by the Hand of GOD: And something is due to the Memory of our departed Friends, according to the Degree of what was excellent and lovely in their Lives; and the Nearness of our Relation and Concern with them. And a wise and well tempered Sorrow in such a Case, is allowable and becoming. 'Tis recorded of our Lord, when Lazarus, *whom he loved*, died, *That Jesus wept* *. 'Tis only Sorrow *without Hope*; a hopeless, despairing Sorrow, when Men let loose the Passion of Grief, and suffer it to carry them beyond all Bounds; and the bitter Waters rise, and swell, and overflow: When there is *Lamentation, and Weeping, and great Mourning*; Rachel *Weeping for her Children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not* †: When it grows intemperate and ungovernable; runs to an undue Degree in the Measure

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* Luke xi. 35.

† Matth. ii. 18.]

sure and Continuance of it; and Men are *swallow'd up with over much Sorrow* *; or unfit for proper Duty, and affects our bodily Health, like *the Sorrow of this World, which worketh Death* †.

THIS the Apostle charges with *Ignorance* of the State of the Dead; of the Gospel Revelation concerning the Resurrection of the Body, and a future Life in the other World. This is an *Heathenish* Grief, and like the *Gentiles* in their State of Darkness; and highly unsuitable to the Gospel State, and the heavenly Hope.

I SHALL conclude all with the *Exhortation* of the Text, *Comfort one another with these Words*: With this View and Consideration of the Case of our departed Friends. Let mournful and afflicting Christians take in the Comfort of this Thought, and minister Comfort to one another. For Example:

STRENGTHEN one another's *Faith*. Study the Grounds of Comfort in the Gospel Revelation. Labour to take in a larger Compass and View of the Case, and to see farther Evidence, and gain farther Satisfaction of Mind. The more firmly we believe it, the greater will be our Joy: For there is the *Joy of Faith*, and the Heirs of Promise have immutable Grounds of *strong Consolation* †.

QUICKEN one another's *Affections*: The Expectations and Desires of the future Blessedness:

* 2 Cor. ii. 7. † — vii. 10. † Heb. vi. 18.

Blessedness: Stir up one another's Souls to a *lively Hope* of the incorruptible Inheritance, and that *thro' Patience, and Comfort of the Scripture, you may have Hope* *. There is great Consolation in a well-grounded Hope; For, *We rejoyce in the Hope of the Glory of God* †. Cherish fervent Love, and warm Desire, the *Love of his Appearance, and Desire of your Departure*, to feed your Comforts, and enliven your Joy.

HELP one another's *Memories*. We often know these Things, but are easily apt to forget and over-look them. We must keep in *Memory what is Preached, that we may not believe in vain* †. And give more diligent Heed to the Things we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip *. The Apostle particularly points to such a Case; *Remember them who had the Rule over you, who have spoken to you the Word of the Lord; whose Faith follow, considering the End of their Conversation* †. Refresh one another's Memories with what you have been taught; put one another in mind of these Things. So may you maintain Communion with your departed Friends, by devout and serious Thoughts, and delightful Remembrance and Commemoration of them.

FINALLY; Sweeten one anothers *Discourse*. Let them who *fear the Lord speak often one to another about these Words*. When *Moses and Elias*

* Rom. xv. 4. † — v. 1. † 1 Cor. xv. 2.

* Heb. ii. 1. † — xiii. 7.

Elias appear'd in Glory upon the Mount, They *spake of our Lord's Decease which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem* *. And the Apostle speaks of *shortly putting off his Tabernacle*, and what should happen *after his Decease* †. 'Tis good to be speaking of one anothers Departure and Separation, especially who have continued long in the World, and lived many Years of Life together. It tends to preserve an habitual Seriousness, and promote a Heavenly Mind. And it would be very profitable to be sometimes speaking concerning others who are already departed, to discourse together concerning the happy State of departed Saints. How comfortable is it for Christians thus to bespeak one another; “ I have a *Father or Mother, Brother or Sister, Husband or Wife, Son or Daughter, a dear and intimate Friend*, now with CHRIST: “ I have lost the Benefit and Pleasure of their Acquaintance and Converse in this World; “ but they have better Company, and are in a better State. They are fled from my Embraces, but they rest in *Abraham's Bosom*. “ They are safe in their *Father's House*, and “ have chang'd Worlds to infinite Advantage. “ I am waiting my Departure and Release, “ when I shall see them again, and dwell “ with them for ever. We parted with Sorrow, with great Reluctance of Nature, “ and

* Luke ix. 31.

† 2 Pet. i. 14, 15.

“ and deep Distress; it was like a *Sword pierc-*
“ *ing thro’ the Bowels* †, or rending a Limb
“ from the Body; but how comfortable will
“ be our Meeting together again, how joyful
“ will be the first Interview and Greeting of
“ dear departed Friends; how pleasant the
“ Enjoyment after so long an Absence, and
“ how unspeakable the Delight for ever!”

I HOPE by this Time We are prepared to hear what I have to offer concerning our *Deceased Friend*, whose Death occasion’d this Discourse. I shall speak with the greater *Freedom*, because I am able to do it with great *Satisfaction*, and upon the best *Authority*. It was most agreeable to her known Disposition, to use great *Modesty* of Speech upon such Occasions. She had no great Opinion of *Funeral Oratory* so often imploy’d to flatter the *Dead*, and abuse the *Living*; and was sometimes ready to suspect, The *Dead* were often praised for no other Reason, but because they were *Dead*. Something however is due to her *Memory*, and to the Honour of the *Divine Grace* in Her, in whom were many Things very *Excellent*, and *Exemplary* to Others.

THE Name of her Father Mr. *Robert Gledhill* is still very precious among the Good People where he liv’d and died, as he was a bright Example of *Family* and *Practical Religion*,

† Luke ii. 25.

gion, and *Publick* Usefulness in those Parts *. She often spoke of his eminent Holiness with Gratitude and Pleasure, and was always thankful for the singular Blessing of descending from *Godly Parents*, and of a *Pious Education*. The *Impression* of his Example, Instruction, and Prayers remain'd upon her, and was a great means of softening Her Heart and influencing her Behaviour. The more she grew acquainted with Divine Things, she had still higher and greater Apprehensions of belonging to God in a *Covenant Way*, and of the Value and Importance of the Relation and Rights of a Covenant State. She often reflected on the *Vanity* of her *Youth*, with a true Concern, but was always sensible of the Mercy of being preserved by Divine Grace and Providence, in the midst of many Snares, from the *Error of the Wicked*, and the *Path of the Destroyer*.

AFTER She became a Wife, She increased in fervent *Desires* after God. And as She had the advantage of constant Assistance, She was a most suitable *Companion* to her nearest Relation; and by Her natural Cheerfulness, and easy Mind; Her great Fidelity and tender Affection; both strengthen'd his Hands, and comforted his Heart. Her Wisdom and Experience in *Family Affairs*, eased him of the burden

* Near Wakefield in Yorkshire.

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burden of worldly Cares, and her Presence and Conversation, gave a Sweetness to all the Blessings of Life. She had a very *humble* Sense of her own *Unworthiness* towards GOD, and would often speak of the *future Happiness*, as a *vast* and *mighty* Thing; and be even astonish'd at the *Freedom* and *Riches* of Divine Grace, which must bring a *sinful* Creature to Heaven.

THEY who best knew her will readily agree, She was strictly *Honest* and *Sincere*, and *spoke the Truth from her Heart*. *Disimulation* was her Aversion and Dread. She was *Courteous* and *Civil* to All, and had a Pleasure in *Serving* and *Obliging* every One about her. She was of a *tender* and *sympathizing* Spirit, and had a mighty Sense of the *Affections* and *Afflictions* of her Friends; and always dispos'd to *rejoyce with them who rejoiced*, and *mourn'd with them who mourned*. She was always *contented* with her State, and *thankful* for the Happy Condition in which GOD had placed her; neither *despising* those below her, nor *envying* those above her. In the midst of every earthly Enjoyment Heaven had her Heart, and heavenly Things her best Affection.

AMONG the Troubles of her Life the *Losses*, *Miscariages* and *Afflictions* of her *Relations*, were neither Few nor Small; but

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she was remarkable for a great and steady *Trust* in GOD, in all the Difficulties which beset her; and would often say, *Prosperity* was the greatest Snare, and that she never met with *Affliction*, but she had Reason to *bles*s GOD for it. She waited at *Wisdom's* Gates with spiritual Benefit, and found peculiar Comfort and Delight in a serious Attendance upon all the Ordinances of the Gospel Worship. She excelled in the most difficult Duty of the Christian Life, and what is commonly found so hard to others, was easy to her; a Readiness to forgive Injuries. She had formerly been try'd in several Instances, and in very tender Points, tho' blessed be GOD, she had little Occasion to exercise this Vertue in this Place.

HER last *Sickness* was grievous and painful; and tho' made as easy by the Tenderness and Compassion of her dear Friends about her, as possible, of which she express'd the tenderest *Resentment*, and which has left the most grateful *Remembrance* in her surviving *Relict*; yet it was sufficient to try her Patience and her Faith too. She often said, "None knew what she endured, but GOD only:" Tho' no one thought her *impatient*, but herself alone. Her Passage at length was Easy, as her Soul was *Calm* and Compos'd: Her last Words were, "I will

" lie

“ lie down and sleep.” She did so, and without a Groan, she *slept the Sleep of Death*, and I doubt not, *sleeps in Jesus*.

THO’ Her Sickneſs and Death were the more Grievous and Surprizing, by being *Absent* from Home, and in a *Journeying* State; there is this Comfort in that Caſe, That every Place is equally *near* our heavenly Fathers Houſe, and the *Preſence* of CHRIST, which makes the Happineſs of Heaven, will eaſily make up the want of any Conveniences on Earth. ’Tis the ſame Thing to a *Glorify’d* Saint in Heaven, whether his Paſſage out of the World was Early or Late, with Difficulty or Eaſe, from his Own Home or the remotest Corner of the Earth: The firſt Moment of the Heavenly Bleſſedneſs, will wear out all the Impreſſions of *Sorrow* in this World, and be a ſure Earneſt of *Eternal Joys*.



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Sermon to the Societies for Reformation
of Manners. Preached at *Salters-hall*,
June 29. 1702.

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21. 1708.

A Sermon preached in *Crutched-Fryers* near
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A Sermon preached to the Societies for
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Monday *June 29, 1719.* By *Samuel Rose-*
well, M. A.

